

The Church of the Servant King

www.cotask.org

Survey of the Bible Series – Paul’s Letter to the Galatians

(SB_Galatians_Lsn14_Chapter 6_Conclusion)

Beginning in chapter 5, Paul began to address practical points of application for phase 2 of the believer’s live based upon the phase 1 doctrines he previously developed in chapters 3 and 4, namely justification by faith alone in Christ alone results in salvation. In chapter 5, Paul addresses life lived by means of the Spirit as contrasted to life lived in the energy of the flesh. Then in chapter 6, Paul turns to addressing responsibilities of the Christian life. An outline of chapter 6 is helpful at this point.

Responsibilities of the Christian Life (6:1-10)

- Toward sinning Christians (6:1)
- Toward burdened Christians (6:2-5)
- Toward Teachers (6:6-9)
- Toward all people (6:10)

Conclusion (6:11-18)

We’ve already examined 6:1-5, so now we turn our attention to the remaining verses of this epistle.

Responsibilities Toward Teachers (6:6-9)

6 And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. (Gal 6:6-9)

In verse 6, Paul clearly teaches that those who benefited from the teaching of a pastor-teacher should reciprocate by sharing “good things” (i.e. finances) with him. Paul was probably responding to the efforts of the Judaizers who were attempting to influence the Galatian believers to not provide any financial support for Paul’s ministry or the ministry of anyone whose teaching was consistent with Paul’s grace gospel. It is interesting that Paul defended the right of a teacher to be compensated and supported financially by those to whom he ministered; however, Paul voluntarily gave up his right to financial compensation so as to give no ammunition to his accusers.

Perhaps the Judaizers had influenced some of the believers to slack off in their support of the teachers, a special group who were giving their full time to this ministry and who were reimbursed for their labors (cf. 1 Cor. 9:7-14). This concept of voluntary giving to provide for the Lord’s servants was revolutionary since Jews were taxed for the support of their priests and Gentiles paid fees, made vows, etc., to sustain their religions.¹

7 Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? 8 I am not speaking these things according to human

¹ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary – New Testament* (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc., 1983, 1985).

judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? 10 Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the* crops. 11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? 12 If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar? 14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. (1 Cor 9:7-14)²

In verses 7-8, Paul is no doubt addressing the situation among the believers of Galatia and the influence of the Judaizers among them. In doing so, Paul is using a little sarcasm as he references "sowing to the flesh" for it is the Judaizers who were emphasizing the continuance of circumcision – a ritual associated with the Mosaic Law. The Judaizers were encouraging the Galatians to throw their financial support behind the continuance of the fleshly practice of circumcision.

Paul essentially is saying that if one believes that rituals of the flesh lead to life in time or eternity, one will reap a harvest from that belief that is corruption (or death). On the contrary, if one yields to the Spirit, one will reap a harvest from that belief that is life. Of course the principle in context that Paul is observing extends much further in terms of application.

Principle: If you sow to the wind, you will reap the whirlwind.

Principle: What you believe drives your decisions (i.e. actions).

Principle: Your decisions determine your destiny in life.

Principle: Your destiny is ultimately one of death or life.

Application: What are the elements of your belief system in regards to your identity? Who defines you? The world and what it values (e.g. money, success, fame, possessions, position, etc.)? God's Word (e.g. identification with Christ in His sacrificial life and death)?

In verse 9, Paul highlights the necessity for patience or what we might call contentment of soul that arises from satisfaction with deferred gratification. Sometimes we sow seeds of righteousness borne of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives and we don't see any results. God says in these verses to never cease doing so. Whether we reap the results of that sowing in short order or not until eternity, we should not stop sowing.

Toward All People (6:10)

10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Paul teaches the importance of the believer's witness in terms of how the believer treats others. When Jesus fed the 5,000, believers and unbelievers participated. With regard to believers, we should have the attitude that we have a fiduciary responsibility toward them – another person for whom Jesus died. We should have the attitude that for this brief, passing moment of time (i.e. "while we have opportunity"), we have been granted the privilege of being

² Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from *The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation, 1977).

given temporary custody of a relationship with another of God's children. It is as if God has given us permission to engage with one of His children. An analogy: another parent gives you temporary custody of their child when you keep that child for the night or transport that child to a game. You are extra careful to insure that the child is safe. That is the idea here with regard to how we should view the privilege of association with another of God's children.

Conclusion (6:11-18)

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. **12** Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. **13** For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh. **14** But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. **15** For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. **16** And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. **17** From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus. **18** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

This is not the only time that Paul will take the pen from his scribe and begin to write himself (see 1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17). The "large letters" in which he wrote is probably a reference to either the larger size of his personal handwriting or he may have written in all capital letters. Either way, the section of this letter that was written personally by the Apostle Paul was clearly distinguishable from the rest of the letter. Some have speculated that Paul wrote this way because of poor eyesight; however, it is just as likely that Paul desired to conclude his letter with more emphasis.

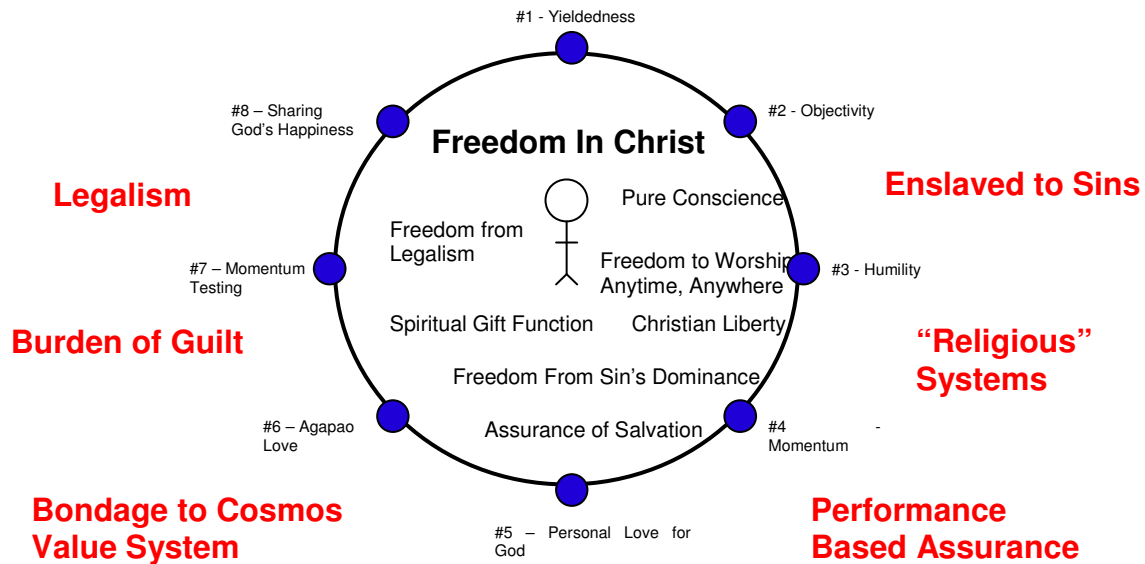
In verses 12 and 13, Paul makes some interesting statements that essentially recap or highlight the major points of his letter. Note the following phrases.

- Verse 12 – "*Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised...*" – The Judaizers were more interested in an outward display because they were men-pleasers (cf. Gal 1:10).
- Verse 12 – "*...simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ*" – Paul highlights one of the motives of the Judaizers – the fear of being persecuted by other Jewish unbelievers.
- Verse 13 – "*For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves...*" The Judaizers, as is true of every man, could not keep every point of the Mosaic Law (3:10-14).
- Verse 13 – "*...but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh*" – The Judaizers simply wanted to be able to claim the Galatians as a prize or a trophy as they sought to win favor with man not God.

The contrast between the motives of the Judaizers and Paul's motives is highlighted in verse 14. Paul makes some very important statements in verses 14-18 and we shall examine them here.

- Verse 14 – "*But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...*" – This thought permeates the consciousness of every mature believer in the Lord. An occupation with the Person and Work of Christ permeates and is superimposed over everything we say and do. We are consciously aware of our ambassadorship, our

fiduciary responsibilities towards others. Such a conscious awareness can only be borne in the believer as the various components of the spiritual power sphere holistically take effect in the believer's life. Which of the components of the spiritual power sphere do you believe are manifested in Paul's statement?



There is not only an *insulating effect* provided by the spiritual power sphere, but there is also an *impact effect* provided by the spiritual power sphere. The *insulating effect* of the spiritual power sphere shields the believer from the ravages of the world, the flesh and Satan's system. The *impact effect* of the spiritual power sphere is demonstrated as the believer is empowered by the Holy Spirit to exploit opportunities to witness for Christ and to exercise his/her spiritual gift after having demonstrated yieldedness in prayer.

In our passage, how do you see Paul demonstrating both effects of the spiritual power sphere?

(Hint: On the one hand, he is *insulated* from the deceptive influences of alternative power schemes, i.e. the “fleshly” based, pseudo-gospel of the Judaizers and the favor of the religious establishment he would have gained by accommodating their system. On the other hand, Paul is emboldened to stand virtually alone against unbelievers and deceived believers who are blinded and/or confused by 2000 years of tradition. As a result, Paul's impact upon history has continued for approximately 2000 years).

Principle: Power is required to live in this present cosmic system whose ruler is Satan.

Principle: The mature believer in Christ is not deceived or distracted by alternative schemes of empowerment, e.g. systems that give a false message of validation to our desire to be accepted by the world and by God. Examples include: religious systems that provide a deceptive message of acceptance based upon pseudo-truth; false systems of validating manhood; false systems of validating womanhood; systems that provide pseudo financial security in lieu of the believer recognizing and depending upon the Source of all temporal blessing.

Principle: The mature believer's prayer life is essential to the execution of God's power so that historical impact occurs.

Principle: The greater the historical impact of a believer, the greater the opposition (i.e. the greater the momentum testing).

- Verse 14b – “...through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” – Here Paul expresses thoughts similar to what we have and will examine in Romans 6. He also builds upon the statement He made in earlier in Galatians 2:20-21 which is a part of the section of this letter where Paul stated His thesis.

Paul’s doctrinal and conceptual paradigm is reflected in this phrase. Phase 1 Truths such as positional sanctification and justification (by faith alone in Christ alone – see Gal 2:15ff) have impact in terms of phase 2 living for the believer. Having been crucified with Christ, we are identified with Him in His death, burial and resurrection. We are seen as dead to sin and the reliance upon works-based systems that characterizes the unbeliever. We are free to live in grace – free from the burden of legalism, guilt and shame. He (Jesus) carried all of those heavy burdens to the Cross where He bore the penalty in our place and provides us with a new, eternal life, eternal peace and eternal joy that we can begin to experience now. What guilt, what burdens, what heavy load do you still try to carry? Have you ever wronged anyone? Have you ever been wronged by anyone?

- Verse 15 – “*For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation*” – Here Paul summarizes an argument that he has defended earlier in the letter and which is stated in 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” As we have discussed, this statement encapsulates the principles associated with the dawn of a new dispensation – a watershed event in human history that is and was as equally dramatic as the call of Abram through whom God established a new, specially-called race of people.
- Verse 16 – “*And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God*” – Paul uses the Greek word *kanon* (Gr. κανων). This Greek word was used in a secular sense of a reed or measuring standard. So, perhaps a better translation for us might be “standard.” The word “rule” gives the impression of a law or ordinance and the Christian way of life is to be lived in the freedom provided by grace according to the standards (not law) set forth in Scripture that is relevant for the Body of Christ.

The next phrase that is important to note is the phrase “peace and mercy be upon them.” Those who embrace the grace-based teaching of the Apostle Paul can expect to experience “peace” – that assurance of one’s eternal destiny that is rooted in the work of Christ and that freedom from a works-based, legalistic system of pseudo-assurance in time. (Contrast this to the guilt-ridden burden of legalism being promoted by the Judaizers). “Mercy” can be defined (albeit perhaps too simply) as God’s grace in action. Mercy and pardon are closely related ideas and when we rely upon the sufficiency of God’s provision through Christ, we are and continue to be the recipient of God’s merciful grace poured out on us for not only eternity, but during time as well. God continues to provide the logistical and spiritual needs of His own.

Finally, it is important to briefly note Paul’s reference to “*the Israel of God.*” By using this phrase, Paul is reflecting upon and summarizing all that he has previously taught in this letter where he defended his thesis in chapters 3 and 4 that he first presented in Galatians 2:16 that “a man [Jew and Gentile] is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ.” In those chapters, as we have seen previously, Paul argues that the true Israel is the Israel that is justified by faith in the Redeemer as was Abraham who

believed long before he was circumcised. In the life of the true believer, justification by faith alone precedes any righteous works.

Paul's use of this phrase is not an indication that the Body of Christ has replaced or become the new mechanism by and through which God intends to fulfill His promises originally made to Abraham and directed towards His elect nation of Israel. This is the position of replacement theologians. All other 65 occurrences of the term "Israel" in the New Testament are references to "Jews." It would be really strange for Paul to use "Israel" in this passage in reference to Gentiles. Paul is consistent in his writings in distinguishing between two kinds of Israelites – believing and unbelieving (cf. Rom 9:6 – "But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel").

Some have even charged that to make such statements as Paul has made here is tantamount to anti-Semitism. However, the rebuttal to that argument is fairly easy to make. Would Paul be anti-Jew if he expresses such affection for those Jews who are believers as he does in his benediction in our passage as well as many other passages, e.g. Romans 10:1 and 11:1-2?

- Verse 17 – "*From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus*" – Of course, Paul is referencing the scars inflicted by those opposed to the grace gospel (see the following passages).

To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless. (1 Cor 4:11)

10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor 4:10-11)

3 giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited, 4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, 5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, 6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, 7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, 8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true; 9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, 10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things. (2 Cor 6:3-10)

24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure upon me *of* concern for all the churches. (2 Cor 11:24-28)

- Verse 18 – "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.*" – Paul opened this letter with his desire that the Galatian believers would be the beneficiaries (in time) of God's grace and peace (1:3). He concludes his letter with similar sentiments. How could the Galatians, how can we, not respond to Paul's passionate and pain-staking appeal that we find in this letter?